

Post Event Summary Report
For Officially Designated WHCOA Events

Name of the Event: Your Life! Your Health! Your Meds!

Date of the Event: January 27, 2005 through September 29, 2005

Location of the Event: One in each of the 18 rural counties in Kansas served by NC-FHAAA:

Maple Hill, KS	Wamego, KS
Manhattan, KS	Minneapolis, KS
Junction City, KS	Ellsworth, KS
Clay Center, KS	Lincoln, KS
Council Grove, KS	Beloit, KS
Marion, KS	Concordia, KS
Salina, KS	Belleville, KS
Emporia, KS	Mankato, KS

Number of persons attending: 669

Sponsoring Organization: North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

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Priority Issue #1: The high cost of prescription drugs for the elderly and the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Part D.

Barriers: The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Part D is far too complicated for the average senior to understand, comprehend, or feel competent enough to make an informed decision about which plan is most beneficial to them. Too many variables among the plans. New Part D is causing other discount programs to eliminate seniors eligibility and for some the new Part D plan will cost them more than the programs they were on, therefore, not reducing the cost of the medications. Medicare keeps making changes in the Part D plan implementation. Private competition is not causing manufacturers of drugs to control their costs.

Proposed solutions:

- ☒ Prohibit advertising prescription drugs on TV and Radio.
- ☒ Marketing is the single highest line item expense of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers.
- ☒ Every Part D plan must cover all drugs.
- ☒ Regulate Part D costs of medication so the cost is stable across all plans.
- ☒ Keep pharmaceutical lobbyists out of D.C.
- ☒ Remove the gap for 100% self pay.
- ☒ Run one program through Medicare – like Part A and Part B and have Medigap policies to cover the deductible and co-pays.
- ☒ Equal prices of drugs in all countries.

- ☑ Prohibit FDA from barricading distribution into the USA drugs proven in other countries to be effective against respective diseases.
- ☑ Don't extend patents based on small change in drugs.
- ☑ Remove the penalty for delaying participation in Part D.
- ☑ CMS should give a significant amount of their marketing budget to SHIP programs instead of the "Bus" and other fancy ads.
- ☑ Medicare could get bids on medications from pharmaceutical manufacturers like the VA does.

Priority Issue #2

Social Security Program should not be privatized. With some modification, it should stay essentially the same.

Barriers:

Congress has used the trust monies to pay for other on-going federally budgeted expenses. There has been no "lock box" on the money paid into Social Security by the working people. Members of Congress and Federal Employees are not participating in Social Security program, therefore, they have no vested interest. Annual increase in Social Security payments does not equal cost of living increases.

Proposed Solutions:

- ☑ Those (Congress) who have authorized use of the Social Security Trust
- ☑ Funds for other federal expenses should be the ones to pay it back and bring the Fund back to solvency.
- ☑ Social Security income annual increases should be on parity with congress's salary increases.
- ☑ Initiate a pilot program for one month and have Congress live on the average American Social Security income.
- ☑ Put Congress on Social Security as other citizens.
- ☑ Have each Congressperson live for one year on what an elderly person has to live on with Social Security.
- ☑ Educate younger population on benefits of Social Security.
- ☑ Provide a retirement seminar for all new workers.
- ☑ Correct the error of the "Notch babies".
- ☑ Prohibit any new regulation that generates "unintended consequences" – or at least mandate action to correct it.
- ☑ Increase Social Security retention for residents on Medicaid in nursing homes from \$30 to \$100/month.
- ☑ Have Congress redeem the Social Security debt (Treasury Notes) out of their salaries.

Priority Issue # 3

Enact a permanent authorization of the Older Americans Act and provide adequate funding of the programs that enable older persons to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

Barriers:

Congress's lack of concern for elderly issues as a priority. Competition in budget for federal funds, i.e., Defense vs. Education vs. Aging Services vs. "Pork Barrel", etc. Inadequate numbers of trained workforce for in-home

- Proposed Solutions:
- ☑ Mandate greater parity of funding for OAA programs.
 - ☑ Educate Congress that OAA programs are more cost-saving in use of Fed. Funds than the entitled nursing home care under Medicaid (although both are necessary).
 - ☑ Give attention to the necessity of having adequately paid and trained persons for in-home services and nursing home services.
 - ☑ Have Congress read and understand the study done by the Kansas University Gerontology Department on the efficiency and efficacy of in-home services.
 - ☑ Encourage programs that recognize the dignity, wisdom, and value of seniors and their importance to society.

Priority Issue #4: Concern for the general economy and its impact on the elderly, particularly those on fixed incomes.

Barriers: High cost of fuel for cars, home utilities, farming, businesses, etc. People who work the system to be on welfare or disability and no accountability. Credit card companies make credit look “easy”. Reluctance on part of Government Agencies to share services/materials/programs – too territorial. Funding cuts in HUD.

- Proposed Solutions:
- ☑ Lower diesel fuel cost so it is equal or no more than gasoline.
 - ☑ Teach value of responsibility in personal money management (high school curriculum on management of credit).
 - ☑ Promote TOTAL cooperation among agencies to minimize duplication.
 - ☑ Pool resources that are available for “the good of the whole”.
 - ☑ Keep assessments, reports, evaluations simple.
 - ☑ Promote a “small town community” version of HUD-supported assisted living in every community that is affordable for lower and middle class persons. Use shared “buy-in” with ROI, bond revenue sharing, capital venture funds.
 - ☑ Examine the balance between money allocation for domestic programs and foreign support.
 - ☑ Adjust money definitions that qualify folks who need help (Federal Poverty Levels).
 - ☑ Give 5% of the Defense and Foreign Aid Budget to fund programs that benefit the elderly.

Priority Issue # 5 Promote personal responsibility for good health. Good health reduces the need for medications.

Barriers: Sedentary life style. Fast food promotions. Stress and overwork to keep financially stable (cost of living increases faster than Social Security cost of living). Dispersion of family unit limits support available for early detection and treatment of diseases.

- Potential Solutions:
- ☑ Maintain or increase support of nutritious meals at senior centers.
 - ☑ Continue attention to good school lunches-school grandparents can partake.
 - ☑ Ask State Boards of Education to require high school students to have volunteer hours – home cooked meals for elderly in their own homes. Address ways to include glasses, hearing aids, and dental care under Medicare and Medicaid programs.
 - ☑ Define standardized Long Term Care Insurances nationwide (similar to the way Medigap policies are standardized).
 - ☑ Incite younger persons to evaluate, access, and prepare for long term care (tax breaks on premiums).
 - ☑ Address lack of public transportation for elderly to be self mobilized to access needed care and services.
 - ☑ Use School buses that sit idle during the day and 3 months in the summer.
 - ☑ Share existing transportation via grants.
 - ☑ Continue education on appropriateness of Advance Directives.
 - ☑ Insurances to offset expenses to health club programs, etc.
 - ☑ Initiate a White House Conference on Children.

Assure the outcome of the WHCOA makes a significant difference in the lives of seniors in the future!